

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 22, 2012

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
Energy & Water Development Subcommittee
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Energy & Water Development Subcommittee
445 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander:

As you work to fund our nations' navigation infrastructure, we ask that you take into consideration the needs of small coastal, including Great Lakes, waterways. Our nations' small ports and harbors serve as the lifeblood of their communities and greatly contribute to the nation's economic vitality. They are home to fishing fleets, marinas and recreational facilities, and are critical to maintaining and creating jobs. The international trade, recreational boating and commercial fishing that takes place at these small ports is more important to the economic health of coastal port communities, and to our nation, now than ever before.

Small ports nationwide remain critically underfunded. For Fiscal Year 2013, the pattern of severely cutting the Army Corps of Engineers budget for these projects continued, leaving many completely zeroed out in the President's budget. While we understand the need for fiscal responsibility, now is the time to be investing in our nation's vital infrastructure projects. Without adequate funding, the navigation channels leading to these ports and harbors will silt in and the jetties protecting these communities will crumble. Many have small populations, and the ports provide employment for a significant proportion of these communities. Without the access to the ports, these communities will be left with nothing.

During this period of economic recovery, we cannot afford to lose support for small ports and harbors. In the FY2012 omnibus, \$30 million in additional Operations & Maintenance (O&M) funding was allocated to small, remote or subsistence harbors nationwide. This was a much appreciated effort to make some of these projects whole, but it was simply not enough. We urge you to include at least \$30 million in additional O&M for small ports in the FY2013 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill.

Leaving our nation's small port needs unmet threatens the jobs of our citizens and weakens our nation's economic competitiveness. We look forward to working with you to address

this issue, and to continuing the effort to allow our small, remote and subsistence harbors to remain open for business. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



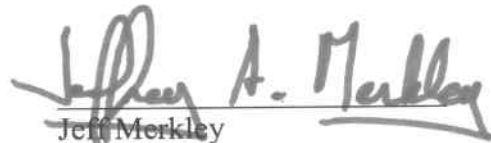
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Carl Levin
United States Senator